

Manuel. Michael Anderson and Robert Anderson rarely attended, and probably not before May.³⁷⁸ Witnesses confirm IGMS had been advised of the change in the position of the Hudson Common Council from neutral or mildly supportive to opposed. They were also aware from meetings with opponent representatives, and reports of such meetings, that several tribes and tribal organizations were strongly opposed but had not provided documentation of feared economic or political harm.

Witnesses involved in the DOI internal discussions deny there was a specific meeting at which a decision was reached. They characterize the events as more of a recognition of a growing consensus that the Hudson application could not be approved. Several witnesses stated that the inter-tribal dispute over the proposal made this a difficult decision for which the staff felt they lacked guidance. Witnesses reported that the decision was complicated by the BIA's trust responsibility to all tribes and the importance placed on tribal sovereignty. Some also reported that the equities were further tested for them by the contrast between the relatively-wealthy opposing tribes and the relatively-poor applicant tribes.

Sibbison told investigators that, although the proposal presented difficult issues, from the beginning she thought many people believed the application would be denied, even though no vote was taken. Every witness questioned said there was no IGMS or DOI employee in Washington who advocated granting the application in the form submitted. Hartman advised that until he saw Skibine's first circulated draft of the denial letter on or about June 29, he could not

³⁷⁸Michael Anderson attended only a couple of the meetings in which the application was discussed. He said he would not normally have attended such meetings if he were not responsible to sign the decision, and he did not know the decision would be delegated to him until June 1995. He was not at the July 5, 1995, meeting discussed below in Section II.G.3.